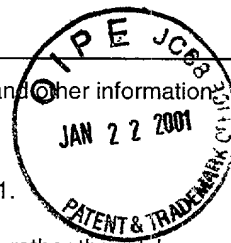
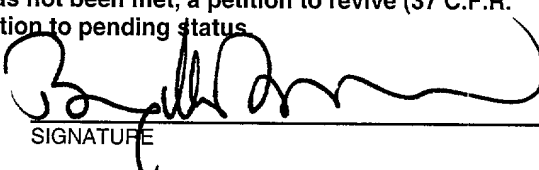


FORM PTO-1390 (REV 11-98)	U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE	ATTORNEY'S DOCKET NUMBER 3547-6
TRANSMITTAL LETTER TO THE UNITED STATES DESIGNATED/ELECTED OFFICE (DO/EO/US) CONCERNING A FILING UNDER 35 U.S.C. 371		U.S. APPLICATION NO. (If known, see 37 C.F.R. 1.5) 09/744159
INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION NO. PCT/EP99/05011	INTERNATIONAL FILING DATE 15 July 1999	PRIORITY DATE CLAIMED 17 August 1998
TITLE OF INVENTION FILTER MODULE		
APPLICANT(S) FOR DO/EO/US STROHM et al.		
<p>Applicant herewith submits to the United States Designated/Elected Office (DO/EO/US) the following items and other information:</p> <p>1. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> This is a FIRST submission of items concerning a filing under 35 U.S.C. 371.</p> <p>2. <input type="checkbox"/> This is a SECOND or SUBSEQUENT submission of items concerning a filing under 35 U.S.C. 371.</p> <p>3. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> This is an express request to begin national examination procedures (35 U.S.C. 371(f)) at any time rather than delay examination until the expiration of the applicable time limit set in 35 U.S.C. 371(b) and PCT Articles 22 and 39(1).</p> <p>4. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A proper Demand for International Preliminary Examination was made by the 19th month from the earliest claimed priority date.</p> <p>5. A copy of the International Application as filed (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(2)).</p> <p>a. <input type="checkbox"/> is transmitted herewith (required only if not transmitted by the International Bureau).</p> <p>b. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> has been transmitted by the International Bureau.</p> <p>c. <input type="checkbox"/> is not required, as the application was filed in the United States Receiving Office (RO/US).</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A translation of the International Application into English (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(2)).</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Amendments to the claims of the International Application under PCT Article 19 (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(3)).</p> <p>a. <input type="checkbox"/> are transmitted herewith (required only if not transmitted by the International Bureau).</p> <p>b. <input type="checkbox"/> have been transmitted by the International Bureau.</p> <p>c. <input type="checkbox"/> have not been made; however, the time limit for making such amendments has NOT expired.</p> <p>d. <input type="checkbox"/> have not been made and will not be made.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> A translation of the amendments to the claims under PCT Article 19 (U.S.C. 371(c)(3)).</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> An oath or declaration of the inventor(s) (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(4)).</p> <p>10. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A translation of the annexes to the International Preliminary Examination Report under PCT Article 36 (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(5)) (Amended claim pages 1 through 3 containing claims 1 through 14).</p> <p>Items 11. To 16. Below concern document(s) or information included:</p> <p>11. <input type="checkbox"/> An Information Disclosure Statement under 37 C.F.R. 1.97 and 1.98.</p> <p>12. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> An assignment document for recording. A separate cover sheet in compliance with 37 C.F.R. 3.28 and 3.31 is included.</p> <p>13. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A FIRST preliminary amendment. <input type="checkbox"/> A SECOND or SUBSEQUENT preliminary amendment.</p> <p>14. <input type="checkbox"/> A substitute specification.</p> <p>15. <input type="checkbox"/> A change of power of attorney and/or address letter.</p> <p>16. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other items or information. PTO-1449 and International Search Report <input type="checkbox"/> This application is entitled to "Small entity" status. <input type="checkbox"/> "Small entity" statement attached.</p>		



U.S. APPLICATION NO. (known) see 37 C.F.R. 1.53 Unknown 09/744159		INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION NO. PCT/EP99/05011		ATTORNEY'S DOCKET NUMBER 3547-6	
17. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The following fees are submitted:				CALCULATIONS PTO USE ONLY	
BASIC NATIONAL FEE (37 C.F.R. 1.492(a)(1)-(5)): -- Neither international preliminary examination fee (37 C.F.R. 1.482) nor international search fee (37 C.F.R. 1.445(a)(2)) paid to USPTO and International Search Report not prepared by the EPO or JPO\$1000.00 -- International preliminary examination fee (37 C.F.R. 1.482) not paid to USPTO but International Search Report prepared by the EPO or JPO\$860.00 -- International preliminary examination fee (37 C.F.R. 1.482) not paid to USPTO but international search fee (37 C.F.R. 1.445(a)(2)) paid to USPTO\$710.00 -- International preliminary examination fee paid to USPTO (37 C.F.R. 1.482) but all claims did not satisfy provisions of PCT Article 33(1)-(4)\$690.00 -- International preliminary examination fee paid to USPTO (37 C.F.R. 1.482) and all claims satisfied provisions of PCT Article 33(1)-(4)\$100.00 <div style="text-align: right;">ENTER APPROPRIATE BASIC FEE AMOUNT =</div>				<div style="text-align: right;">\$ 860.00</div>	
Surcharge of \$130.00 for furnishing the oath or declaration later than <input type="checkbox"/> 20 <input type="checkbox"/> 30 months from the earliest claimed priority date (37 C.F.R. 1.492(e)).				\$ 0.00	
CLAIMS	NUMBER FILED	NUMBER EXTRA	RATE		
Total Claims	14	-20 = 0	X \$18.00	\$ 0.00	
Independent Claims	1	-3 = 0	X \$80.00	0.00	
MULTIPLE DEPENDENT CLAIMS(S) (if applicable)			\$270.00	\$ 0.00	
TOTAL OF ABOVE CALCULATIONS =				\$ 860.00	
Reduction by 1/2 for filing by small entity, if applicable. Small entity status must also be asserted. (Note 37 C.F.R. 1.9, 1.27, 1.28).				0.00	
SUBTOTAL =				\$ 860.00	
Processing fee of \$130.00, for furnishing the English Translation later than <input type="checkbox"/> 20 <input type="checkbox"/> 30 months from the earliest claimed priority date (37 C.F.R. 1.492(f)).				0.00	
TOTAL NATIONAL FEE =				\$ 860.00	
Fee for recording the enclosed assignment (37 C.F.R. 1.21(h)). The assignment must be accompanied by an appropriate cover sheet (37 C.F.R. 3.28, 3.31). \$40.00 per property				\$ 40.00	
Fee for Petition to Revive Unintentionally Abandoned Application (\$1240.00 - Small Entity = \$620.00)				\$ 0.00	
TOTAL FEES ENCLOSED =				\$ 900.00	
				Amount to be: refunded \$	
				Charged \$	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A check in the amount of \$900.00 to cover the above fees is enclosed. <input type="checkbox"/> Please charge my Deposit Account No. 14-1140 in the amount of \$_____ to cover the above fees. A duplicate copy of this form is enclosed. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required, or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 14-1140. A duplicate copy of this form is enclosed. d. <input type="checkbox"/> The entire content of the foreign application(s), referred to in this application is/are hereby incorporated by reference in this application. NOTE: Where an appropriate time limit under 37 C.F.R. 1.494 or 1.495 has not been met, a petition to revive (37 C.F.R. 1.137(a) or (b)) must be filed and granted to restore the application to pending status.					
SEND ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO: NIXON & VANDERHYE P.C. 1100 North Glebe Road, 8 th Floor Arlington, Virginia 22201 Telephone: (703) 816-4000					
				 SIGNATURE	
				Bryan H. Davidson NAME	
				30,251 REGISTRATION NUMBER	
				January 22, 2001 Date	

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Patent Application of

STROHM et al.

Atty. Ref.: 3547-6

Serial No. **Unknown**

Group:

National Phase of **PCT/EP99/05011**

Filed: **January 22, 2001**

Examiner:

For: **FILTER MODULE**

* * * * *

January 22, 2001

Assistant Commissioner for Patents
Washington, DC 20231

Sir:

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

Prior to calculation of the filing fee and in order to place the above identified application in better condition for examination, please amend the application as follows:

IN THE SPECIFICATION

Page 1, before the first line, insert as a separate paragraph:

-- This application is the national phase of international application

PCT/EP99/05011 filed July 15, 1999. --.

IN THE CLAIMS (AS ATTACHED TO THE INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION REPORT)

Please substitute the following amended claims 1 through 14 for original claims 1 through 14. A copy of original claims 1 through 14 showing revisions is attached.

1. (Amended) Filter module with layers of filter layers of deep bed filter material, between which there are spacer elements of draining layers, the draining layers and the filter layers being stacked on one another without gaps, and the draining layers being sealed on alternate sides to the filtrate/unfiltered material space by means of sealing

elements, characterized in that the draining layers on the transition which is the other one at the time to the filtrate/unfiltered material space have flow elements, and that the sealing elements and/or the flow elements have means for mutual connection.

2. (Amended) Filter module as claimed in claim 1, wherein at least two filter layers with different degrees of separation lie on top of one another.

3. (Amended) Filter module as claimed in claim 1, wherein at least two filter layers with the same degree of separation lie on top of one another.

4. (Amended) Filter module as claimed in claim 1, wherein the filter layers are adsorptively acting filter layers.

5. (Amended) Filter module as claimed in claim 1, wherein differently adsorptively acting materials are worked into the filter layers.

6. (Amended) Filter module as claimed in claim 1, wherein the filter layers have sealing elements [(6)] which point towards the filtrate space.

7. (Amended) Filter module as claimed in claim 1, wherein the sealing elements are moldings.

8. (Amended) Filter module as claimed in claim 1, wherein several sealing elements which adjoin one another are made in one part or are joined to one another leakproof.

9. (Amended) Filter module as claimed in claim 1, wherein the sealing elements on their end faces have structures which fit into the layer which is adjacent at the time.

10. (Amended) Filter module as claimed in claim 1, wherein the flow elements have a massive frame with holes or grooves which lie in the plane of the draining layer.

STROHM et al.
Serial No. **Unknown**

11. (Amended) Filter module as claimed in claim 1, wherein the draining layer has a plastic nonwoven.

12. (Amended) Filter module as claimed in claim 1, wherein the draining layer is made in one piece with the sealing element and the flow element.

13. (Amended) Filter module as claimed in claim 1, wherein these connection means are clips and catch projections.

14. (Amended) Filter module as claimed in claim 1, wherein the filter layers and the draining layers are planar.

REMARKS


By this amendment claims 1 through 14 have been amended to eliminate multiple dependencies and delete references to the drawings. A copy of the original claims 1 through 14 with annotations to show the revisions presented above is attached.

An early and favorable action on the merits is requested.

Respectfully submitted,

NIXON & VANDERHYE P.C.

By:



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APPENDIX OF CLAIMS

Claims 1 through 14

1. Filter module with layers of filter layers [(1, 1a - d)] of deep bed filter material, between which there are spacer elements of draining layers [(5, 5a, 5b)], the draining layers [(5, 5a, 5b)] and the filter layers [(1, 1a - d)] being stacked on one another without gaps, and the draining layers [(5, 5a, 5b)] being sealed on alternate sides to the filtrate/unfiltered material space by means of sealing elements [(6)], characterized in that the draining layers [(5, 5a, 5b)] on the transition which is the other one at the time to the filtrate/unfiltered material space have flow elements [(8)], and that the sealing elements [(6)] and/or the flow elements [(8)] have means [(12)] for mutual connection.

2. Filter module as claimed in claim 1, wherein at least two filter layers [(1, 1a - d)] with different degrees of separation lie on top of one another.

3. Filter module as claimed in claim 1, wherein at least two filter layers [(1, 1a - d)] with the same degree of separation lie on top of one another.

4. Filter module as claimed in [one of claims 1 to 3] claim 1, wherein the filter layers [(1, 1a - d)] are adsorptively acting filter layers.

5. Filter module as claimed in [one of claims 1 to 4] claim 1, wherein differently adsorptively acting materials are worked into the filter layers [(1, 1a - d)].

6. Filter module as claimed in [one of claims 1 to 5] claim 1, wherein the filter layers [(1, 1a - c)] have sealing elements [(6)] which point towards the filtrate space [(3)].

7. Filter module as claimed in [one of claims 1 to 6] claim 1, wherein the sealing elements [(6)] are moldings.

8. Filter module as claimed in [one of claims 1 to 7] claim 1, wherein several sealing elements [(6)] which adjoin one another are made in one part or are joined to one another leakproof.

9. Filter module as claimed in [one of claims 1 to 8] claim 1, wherein the sealing elements [(6)] on their end faces have structures [(7)] which fit into the layer which is adjacent at the time.

10. Filter module as claimed in [one of claims 1 to 9] claim 1, wherein the flow elements [(8)] have a massive frame with holes [(9)] or grooves [(10)] which lie in the plane of the draining layer [(5, 5a, 5b)].

11. Filter module as claimed in [one of claims 1 to 10] claim 1, wherein the draining layer [(5, 5a, 5b)] has a plastic nonwoven.

12. Filter module as claimed in [one of claims 1 to 11] claim 1, wherein the draining layer [(5, 5a, 5b)] is made in one piece with the sealing element [(6)] and the flow element [(8)].

13. Filter module as claimed in [one of claims 1 to 12] claim 1, wherein these connection means are clips [(13)] and catch projections [(14)].

14. Filter module as claimed in [one of claims 1 to 13] claim 1, wherein the filter layers and the draining layers [(5, 5a, 5b)] are planar.

09/744159

J602 Rec'd PCT/PTO 22 JAN 2001

VERIFICATION OF TRANSLATION

I, Joe Crabbs, a translator with Chillson Translating Service, 3530 Chas Drive, Hampstead, Maryland, 21074, hereby declare as follows:

That I am familiar with the German and English languages;

That I am capable of translating from German to English;

That the translation attached hereto is a true and accurate translation of German Application PCT/EP99/05011 filed July 15, 1999 titled, "Filter module;"

That all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true;

And further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any registration resulting therefrom.

BY

Joseph W Crabbs

Executed this 1 day of Jan 2001.

Witness

Chillson

World Intellectual Property Organization

International application published pursuant to the Treaty on
International Patent Cooperation (PCT)

International Patent Classification⁷:
B01D 29/41, 25/26

International Publication Number: WO 00/10684
International Publication Date: March 2, 2000
International File number: PCT/EP99/05011
International Filing Date: July 15, 1999

Priority Data: 198 37 257.4 August 17, 1998 GE
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Designation states: AE, AL, AM, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BY,
CA, CN, CU, CZ, DE, EE, ES, FI, GB, GE, GH, GM, GW, HU, ID, IL,
IS, JP, KP, KE, KG, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MD,
MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, NO, NZ, PT, PL, PT, RO, RU, SD, SE, SG, SI,
SK, SL, TJ, TM, TR, TT, UA, UG, US, UZ, VN, YU, ZW, ARIPO patent
(GH, GM, KE, LS, MW, SD, SZ, UG, ZW), Eurasian patent (AM, AZ,
BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM) European patent (AT, BE, CH, DE, DK,
ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE), OAPI patent (BF,
BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG)

Published
With international search report.

1
7/PRB

00/744159

JG02 Rec'd PCT/PTO 22 JAN 2001

Filter module

Specification:

The invention relates to a filter module with layers of a filter medium, between which there are draining spacer elements, the spacer elements which guide the unfiltered material being sealed relative to the filtrate space.

These filter modules are known in diverse forms, its being common to most of these filter modules that the filter layers are made of flat material, therefore filter cardboard, papers, nonwovens or fabrics.

US 4,347,208 discloses a filter module of filter cells with a core consisting of a plastic draining spacer (inner spacer) on which rests on both sides a filter layer of the filter medium in the form of flat disks. In the center of the filter cell is a filtrate opening. These filter cells must be extrusion coated with a plastic material for sealing on the outer edge. This is complex and expensive because special forms which must be adapted to the geometry of the filter cell must be used for this purpose. The filter cell is sealed relative to the space for the unfiltered material by pressing together the two filter material layers which lie on top of one another in the edge area and by forming a U-shaped plastic element which reaches around the edge area.

Similar filter modules are known from EP 0 285 31 B1, US 2,088,199, US 3,666,107, US 5,607,581 and EP 0 327 394 A2,

preferably in addition support tubes being used on which the filter cells are located and held.

EP 0 233 999 likewise discloses one such filter module in which between the filter cells there are in addition so-called outer spacers which keep the filter cells at a distance in order to prevent damage, collapse or swelling of the filter cells. In addition, the radial flow between the filter cells will be improved. The inner and outer spaces are shaped differently so that different tools are needed for production. Extrusion coated filter cells are used in this filter module as well.

Step filters cannot be produced with these known filter arrangements.

The object of the invention is to simplify the filter module known from EP 0 233 999 with respect to structure, and the production of a step filter will also be possible.

This object is achieved with a filter module in which each layer of filter medium consists of a layer of deep bed filter material, the spacer elements consist of draining layers and the draining layers and the filter layers are stacked on top of one another without a gap, the draining layers being sealed on alternating sides to the filtrate/unfiltered material space.

Use of layers both for spacer elements and also for the filter layers offers the possibility of stacking all layers on top of one another without for example supporting tubes being necessary, as is the case in filter cells. In addition, it is possible to stack any filter layers in any sequence.

One major advantage is that it is not necessary to extrusion coat two or more layers by complex processes. The layers are simply stacked on top of one another with their seals, and immediately or later before use are compressed for the ready-to-work state.

The deep bed material has organic and/or inorganic fibrous and/or grainy materials. As the base material for the filter layers celluloses or plastic fibers are used, into which for example kieselguhr, perlites or metal oxides or other filtration-active substances can be introduced. Here the kieselguhrs and perlites are used to enlarge the inner surface and thus to increase the sediment absorption capacity.

The filter layers and the draining filter layers are preferably planar.

Preferably at least two filter layers with different degrees of separation are placed on top of one another, by which thus a step filter can be easily produced. The last filter layer of this filter layer arrangement can be made for example as a disinfection layer.

It is also possible to place at least two filter layers with the same degree of separation on top of one another. This is advantageous especially when they are adsorptively acting filter layers, because then the passage length for the unfiltered material can be increased at will so that the adsorptive action of the filter material can develop better.

According to another embodiment, variously adsorptively acting materials can be worked into the filter layers. This means

that different materials can be present in different filter layers or that these different materials can also be combined in one filter layer. These filter layers can also be combined with filter layers which are free of adsorptively acting materials.

Sealing of the draining layers to the filtrate or the unfiltered material is done preferably by suitable sealing elements. These sealing elements which can be provided individually for each layer preferably have the same thickness as the corresponding draining layer.

The filter layers must also preferably have the corresponding sealing elements which point to the filtrate space, in an arrangement of filter layers with different permeability and/or degree of separation the tightest layer, i.e. the layer with the highest degree of separation or the lowest permeability, need not necessarily have a sealing element.

Preferably the sealing elements consist of moldings, for example plastic frames, which are inserted together with the layers to form the filter module.

Depending on the embodiment of the filter module, i.e. the arrangement of filter layers and draining layers, several sealing elements can also be stacked on top of one another when they are joined leakproof to one another. Preferably several adjoining sealing elements can be made in one part; this further simplifies production.

Preferably the sealing elements on their end faces have additional structures which can fit into the adjacent layer in

order to increase the contact pressure in particular. These structures can be projections, rings, knobs or the like.

The material for the draining layer can be for example a plastic nonwoven. These materials would be strongly compressed in the structure as claimed in the invention if besides the sealing elements there were not other flow elements on the respectively other passage to the filtrate space or space for the unfiltered material which prevent the draining material from being compressed. For this reason, those flow elements are advantageous which consist of a massive frame which has holes, grooves or other flow openings which are located in the plane of the draining layer.

Preferably the draining layer is made integral with the sealing element and/or flow element. It thus becomes possible to produce cost-favorable components which simply need to be combined and joined with the filter layers.

Preferably the sealing elements and/or flow elements are provided with means for mutual connection. The connection means are also made to be easily detachable so that the module components can be easily separated from one another.

These connection means can comprise clips and catch projections.

The filter module as claimed in the invention offers the advantage that the layers can have any geometries. Round or rectangular layers are preferred.

The layers or the module can have several filtrate/unfiltered material channels which need not be arranged centered.

The production costs of the module as claimed in the invention are much lower than in those modules which are composed of filter cells. Disposal can also be clearly improved. The draining layers need simply be separated from the filter layers. When the layers are connected to one another via clips, for example, these clips need simply be separated and the entire module breaks down into its individual layers. The plastic parts and the filter layers can each be disposed of separately. In contrast to filter cells, which would have to be tediously separated first to dispose of the individual components, major simplification is achieved in the module as claimed in the invention.

Other advantages consist in that the filter modules can be operated in both flow directions, i.e. the filtrate space and space for the unfiltered material can be interchanged. In addition, the filter modules can be backflushed.

Sample embodiments of the invention are explained below using the drawings.

Figure 1 shows a vertical section through a filter module,

Figures 2 a - c show detailed views of a draining layer,

Figure 3 shows a section through a draining layer according to another embodiment,

Figure 4 shows a vertical section through a filter module according to another embodiment,

Figures 5a and 5b show an overhead view and a section through a draining layer according to another embodiment,

Figure 5c shows a section through a corrugated plate,

Filter 6 shows a partial section through a filter module for illustration of the connecting means,

Figure 7 shows a filter device with a filter module.

Figure 1 shows a vertical section through a filter module 4. The filter module consists of filter layers 1 which alternate with draining layers 5. For the geometry of the filter layers 1 and the draining layers 5 for example a round shape can be chosen, as proceeds from Figures 2 a - c. The filter module 4 is surrounded by the space 2 for the unfiltered material and in the center has a filtrate space 3 in the form of a channel. Accordingly both the filter layers 1 and also the draining layers 5 have a central hole. The flow direction of the filtrate and the unfiltered material is indicated by arrow.

In the embodiment shown in Figure 1 one filter layer 1 at a time alternates with one draining layer 5. The draining layers 5 are divided into layers 5a which carry the unfiltered material and layers 5b which carry the filtrate. The layer which carries the unfiltered material is sealed to the filtrate space 3 by a sealing element 6. As a result of the geometry here the sealing elements 6 are annular. In the draining layers 5b which carry the filtrate the passage to the filtrate space 3 is open. These layers are likewise sealed relative to the space 2 for the unfiltered material by the corresponding sealing elements 6. Each draining layer thus has its own sealing element which has the same thickness as the layer.

On the opposite transition to the filtrate space or the space for the unfiltered material the draining layers 5a, 5b each

have a flow element 8 which has the same thickness as the layer and have flow openings 9. The filter module 4 which as described in conjunction with Figure 7 is compressed, retains its shape due to the flow and sealing elements, and the draining layers 5a, 5b can perform their tasks.

In Figure 2a the draining layer 5, 5a is shown in perspective. Figure 2b shows a section through one such layer, in which the flow elements 8 which form the edge area can be seen more clearly. It is a flow ring consisting of a massive plastic material which is provided in the plane of the draining layer 5, 5a with through holes 9. This flow ring 8 together with the sealing elements 6 which likewise consist of massive material prevents the draining layer 5 from being compressed in the assembly and operation of the filter module. It must be ensured that the draining layer passes the unfiltered material unhindered and routes it to the filter material, i.e. to the bordering filter layers.

Figure 2c shows the middle part of the draining layer 5, 5a enlarged so that on the end faces of the sealing element 6 the structures can be clearly seen in the form of sharp projections 7.

The draining layer 5a, the sealing element 6 and the flow element 8 can be individual components. But it is advantageous if the draining layer 5a, the sealing element 6 and the flow element 8 consist of one part because in this way the production costs can be greatly reduced.

Figure 3 shows a section through a draining element 5b which carries the filtrate. In contrast to the draining layer shown in Figure 2b the arrangement of the sealing element 6 and the flow element 8 is interchanged

Figure 4 shows another embodiment of the filter module 4. Between the draining layers 5a, 5b there are several filter layers 1a - 1d. These filter layers 1a - 1d have a degree of separation which rises when viewed in the flow direction, and for example the layer 1d can be a disinfection layer. The disinfection layer 1d is located directly in front of the draining layer 5b for the filtrate and has an especially high degree of separation. In this way the unfiltered material is filtered in stages and thus ensures an especially high service life of the filter module. The filter layers 1a - 1c in this embodiment, like the draining layer 5a which carries the unfiltered material, has filter elements 6 toward the filter space 3. Since the sealing elements of these layers adjoin one another, an one-piece element in the form of a sealing tube can be used. Since the disinfection layer 1d is that layer with the highest degree of separation, the unfiltered material flowing directly to the filtrate space 3 is adequately cleaned and therefore does not require a sealing element.

Figure 5a shows a draining layer 5 in an overhead view and Figures 5b shows a draining layer in a section. The geometry here is rectangular. The sealing element 6 is a rectangular tube which extends up and down over the draining layer 5 to seal the overlying and underlying filter layers (which are not shown in

Figure 5b). The flow element 8 consists of a massive plastic ring with a corrugated plate 9 integrated on its top; this plate has grooves 10 which run in the plane of the draining layer 5. Instead or in addition, the flow element can have on the bottom a corrugated plate. Figure 5c shows a detail of the corrugated plate 11.

Figure 6 shows an extract from the filter module in which the sealing elements 6 each have one connection means 12 which consists of a clip 13 and a corresponding catch projection 14. The catch projections 14 are molded on the radial outer side of the sealing elements 6 in the same way as the clips 13. When the layers 1 and 5 are stacked on top of one another, the clips can catch on the catch projection and thus fix the entire module.

Figure 7 illustrates the filter means 31 into which a filter module 4 is inserted. The filter module 4 stands on a bottom fixed end plate 33. In order to compensate for length changes of the filter module 4 in operation, the top end plate 34 is movably supported. In this case, outside or above the filter module 32 there is the space 35 for the unfiltered material. The filtrate space 36 is located inside or outside of the filter module 4. The unfiltered material passes through a connecting piece 37 in one side wall 38 of the container jacket into the filter means 31. The filtrate leaves the filtrate space 36 through a connecting piece 39 which is located centrally on the bottom of the filter means 31.

Reference numbers

1	filter layer
1a-d	filter layer
2	space for the unfiltered material
3	filtrate space
4	filter module
5	draining layer
5a	draining layer which carries the unfiltered material
5b	draining layer which carries the filtrate
6	sealing element
7	fixing means
8	flow element
9	hole
10	groove
11	corrugated plate
12	connecting means
13	clips
14	catch projection
31	filter means
33, 34	end plate
35	space for the unfiltered material
36	filtrate space
37	connecting piece
38	side wall
39	connecting piece

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Claims:

1. Filter module with layers of filter layers (1, 1a - d) of deep bed filter material, between which there are spacer elements of draining layers (5, 5a, 5b), the draining layers (5, 5a, 5b) and the filter layers (1, 1a - d) being stacked on one another without gaps, and the draining layers (5, 5a, 5b) being sealed on alternate sides to the filtrate/unfiltered material space by means of sealing elements (6), characterized in that the draining layers (5, 5a, 5b) on the transition which is the other one at the time to the filtrate/unfiltered material space have flow elements (8), and that the sealing elements (6) and/or the flow elements (8) have means (12) for mutual connection.

2. Filter module as claimed in claim 1, wherein at least two filter layers (1, 1a - d) with different degrees of separation lie on top of one another.

3. Filter module as claimed in claim 1, wherein at least two filter layers (1, 1a - d) with the same degree of separation lie on top of one another.

4. Filter module as claimed in one of claims 1 to 3, wherein the filter layers (1, 1a - d) are adsorptively acting filter layers.

5. Filter module as claimed in one of claims 1 to 4, wherein differently adsorptively acting materials are worked into the filter layers (1, 1a - d).

6. Filter module as claimed in one of claims 1 to 5, wherein the filter layers (1, 1a - c) have sealing elements (6) which point towards the filtrate space (3).

7. Filter module as claimed in one of claims 1 to 6, wherein the sealing elements (6) are moldings.

8. Filter module as claimed in one of claims 1 to 7, wherein several sealing elements (6) which adjoin one another are made in one part or are joined to one another leakproof.

9. Filter module as claimed in one of claims 1 to 8, wherein the sealing elements (6) on their end faces have structures (7) which fit into the layer which is adjacent at the time.

10. Filter module as claimed in one of claims 1 to 9, wherein the flow elements (8) have a massive frame with holes (9) or grooves (10) which lie in the plane of the draining layer (5, 5a, 5b).

11. Filter module as claimed in one of claims 1 to 10, wherein the draining layer (5, 5a, 5b) has a plastic nonwoven.

12. Filter module as claimed in one of claims 1 to 11, wherein the draining layer (5, 5a, 5b) is made in one piece with the sealing element (6) and the flow element (8).

13. Filter module as claimed in one of claims 1 to 12, wherein these connection means are clips (13) and catch projections (14).

14. Filter module as claimed in one of claims 1 to 13, wherein the filter layers and the draining layers (5, 5a, 5b) are planar.

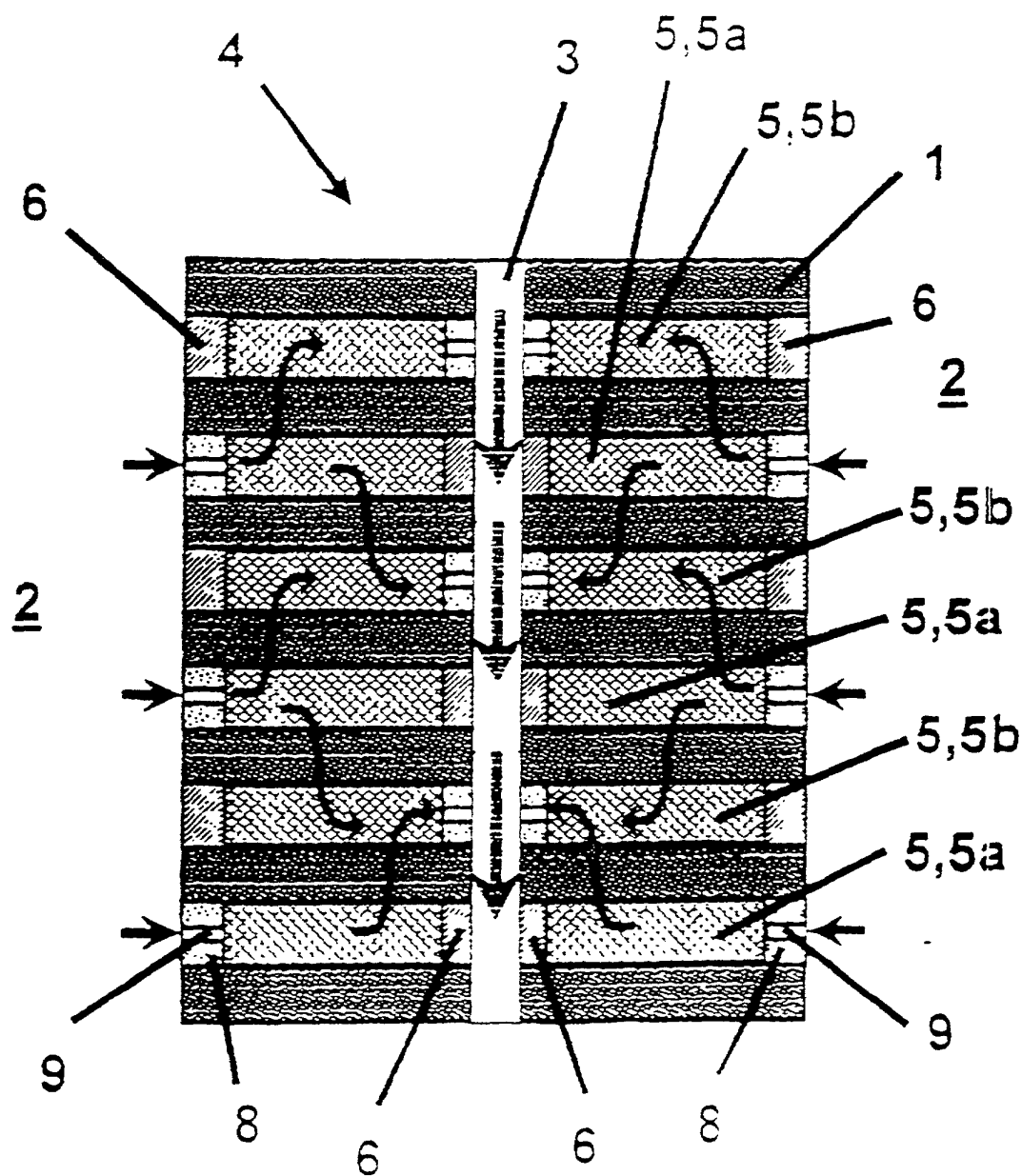


Fig. 1

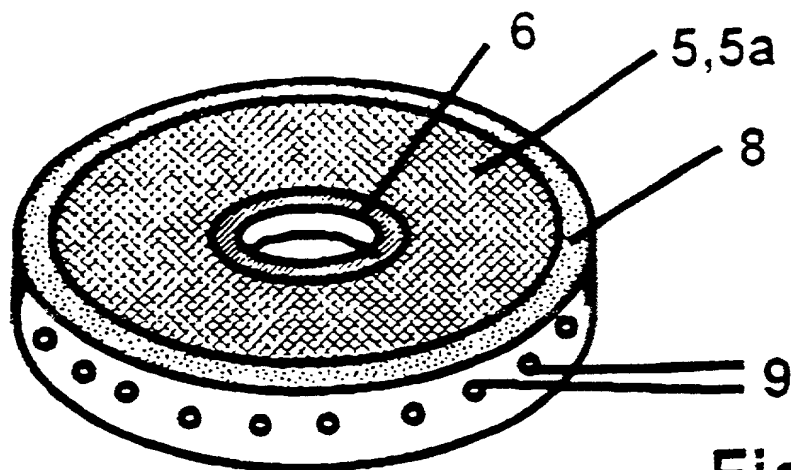


Fig. 2a

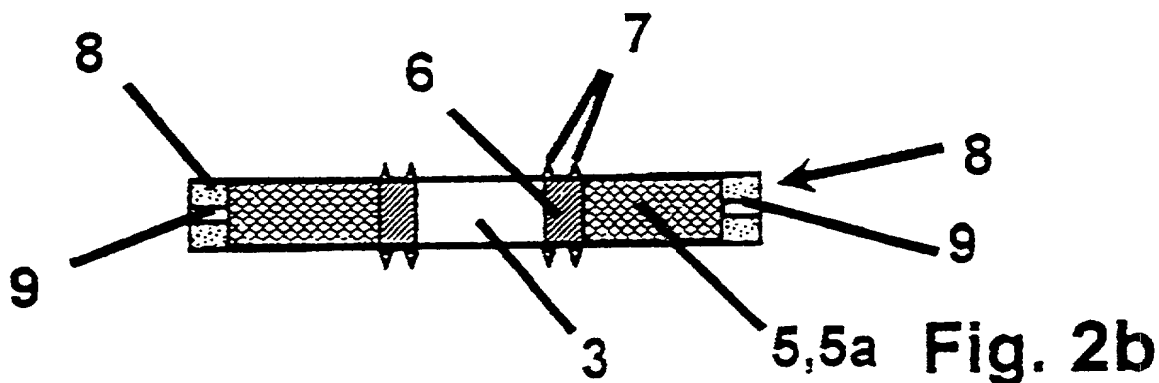


Fig. 2b

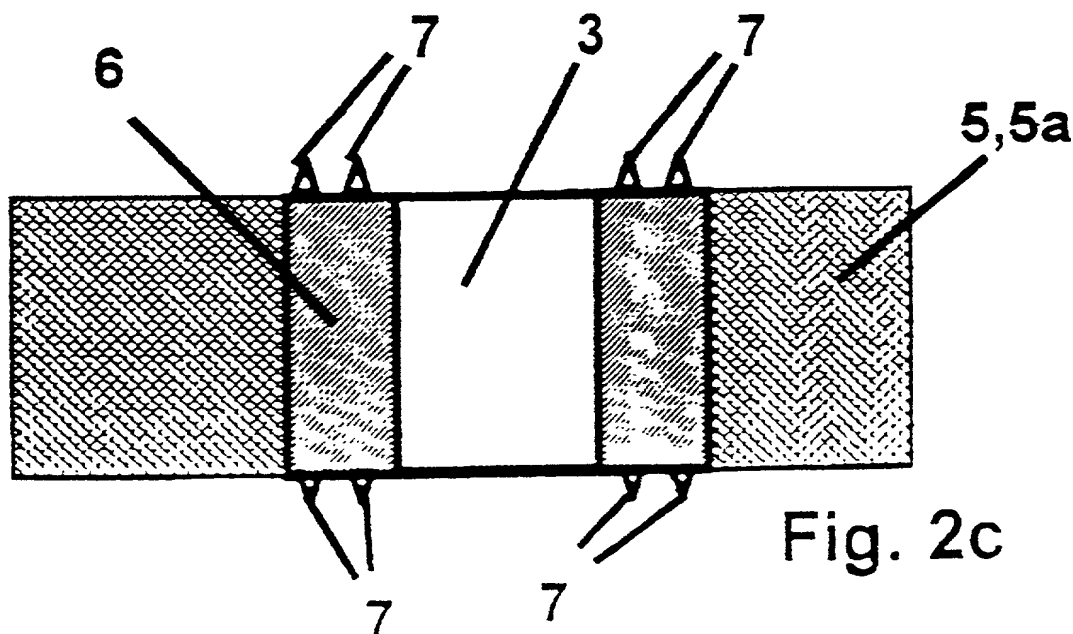


Fig. 2c

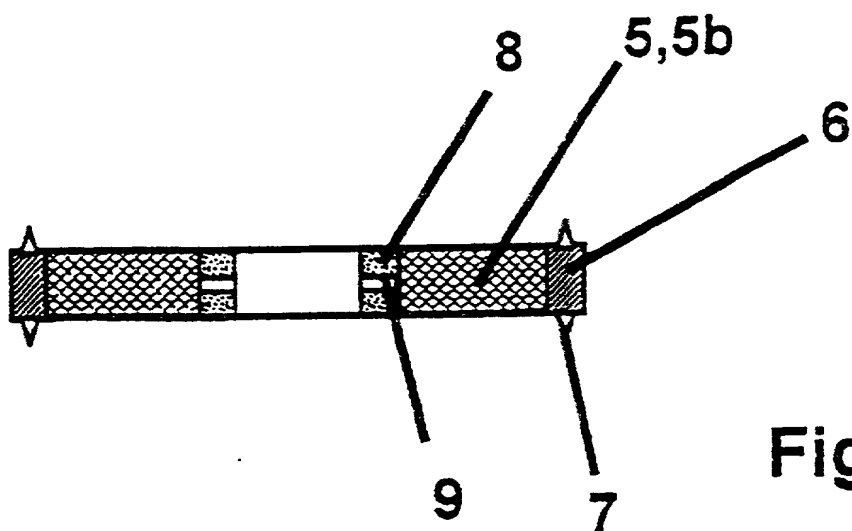


Fig. 3

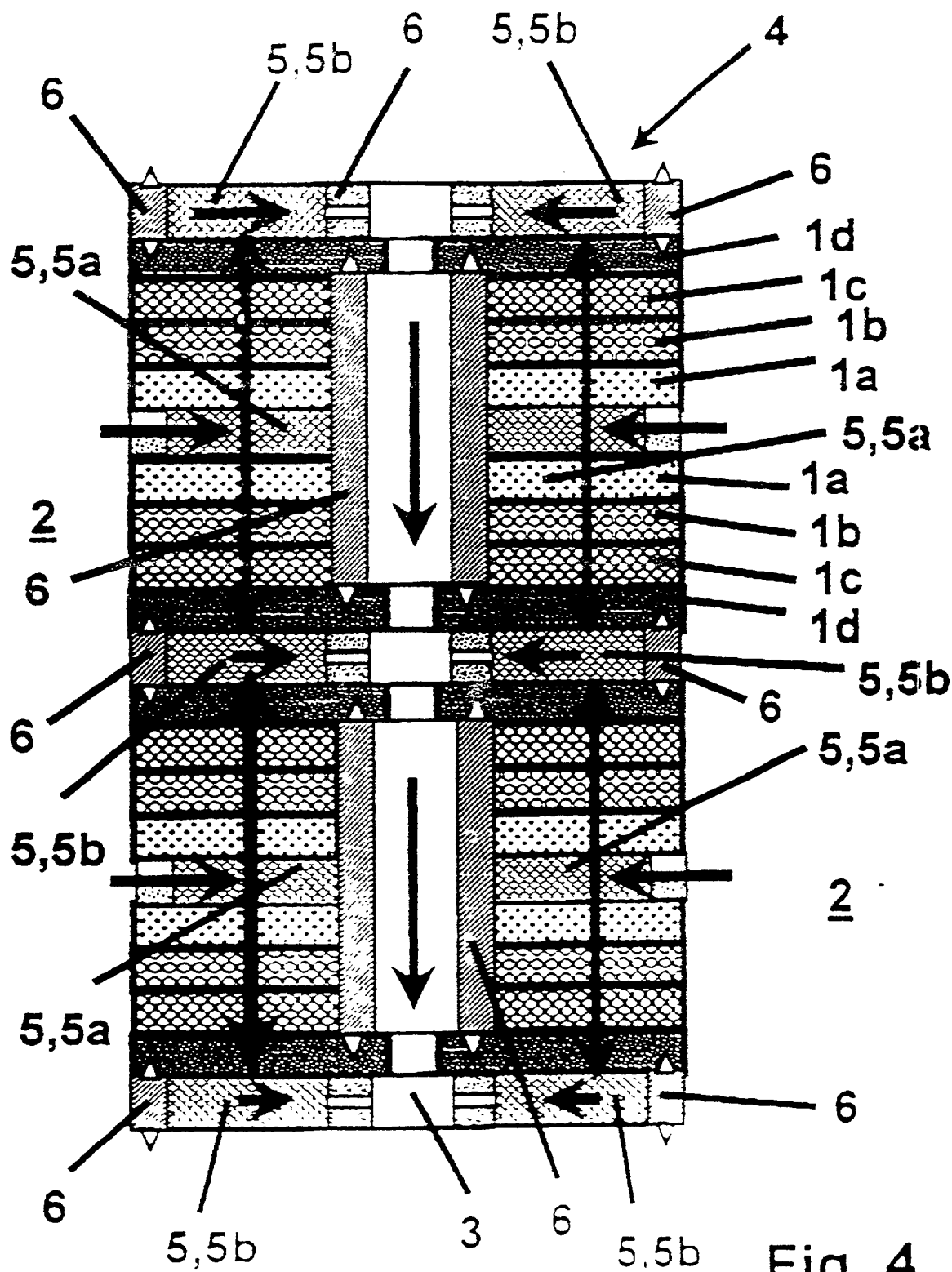
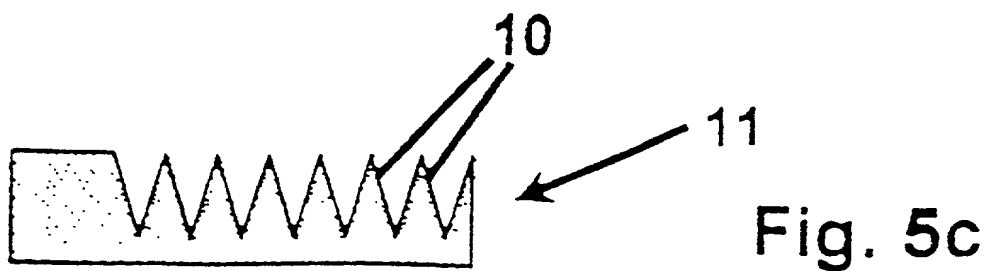
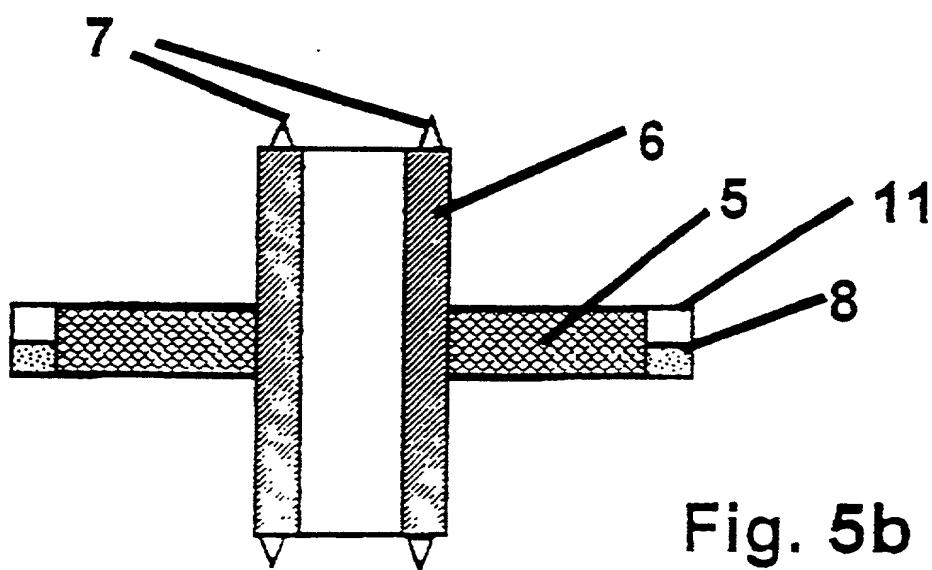
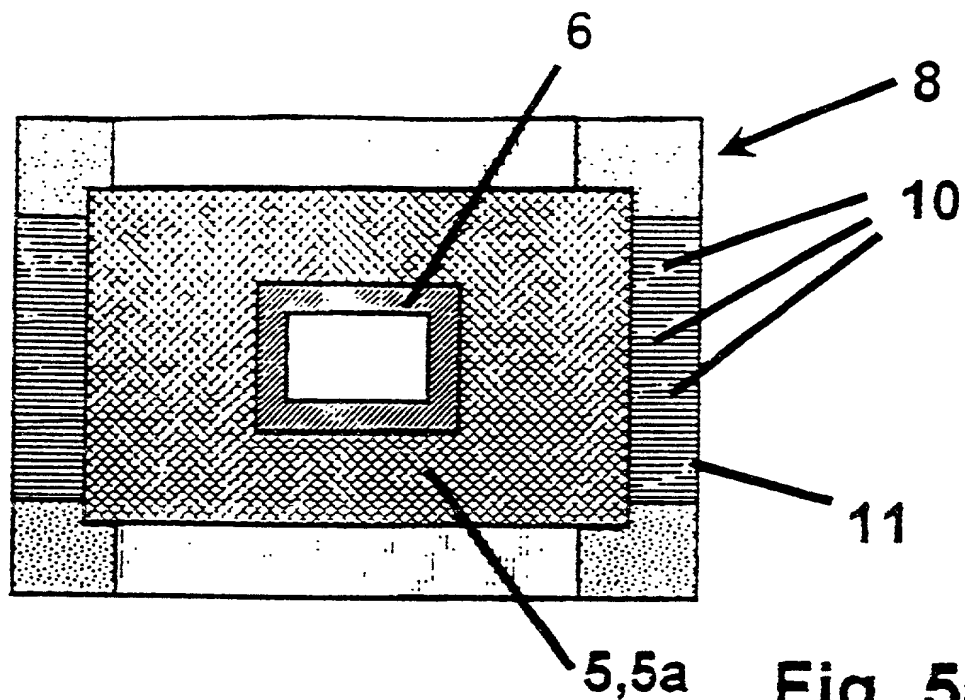


Fig. 4



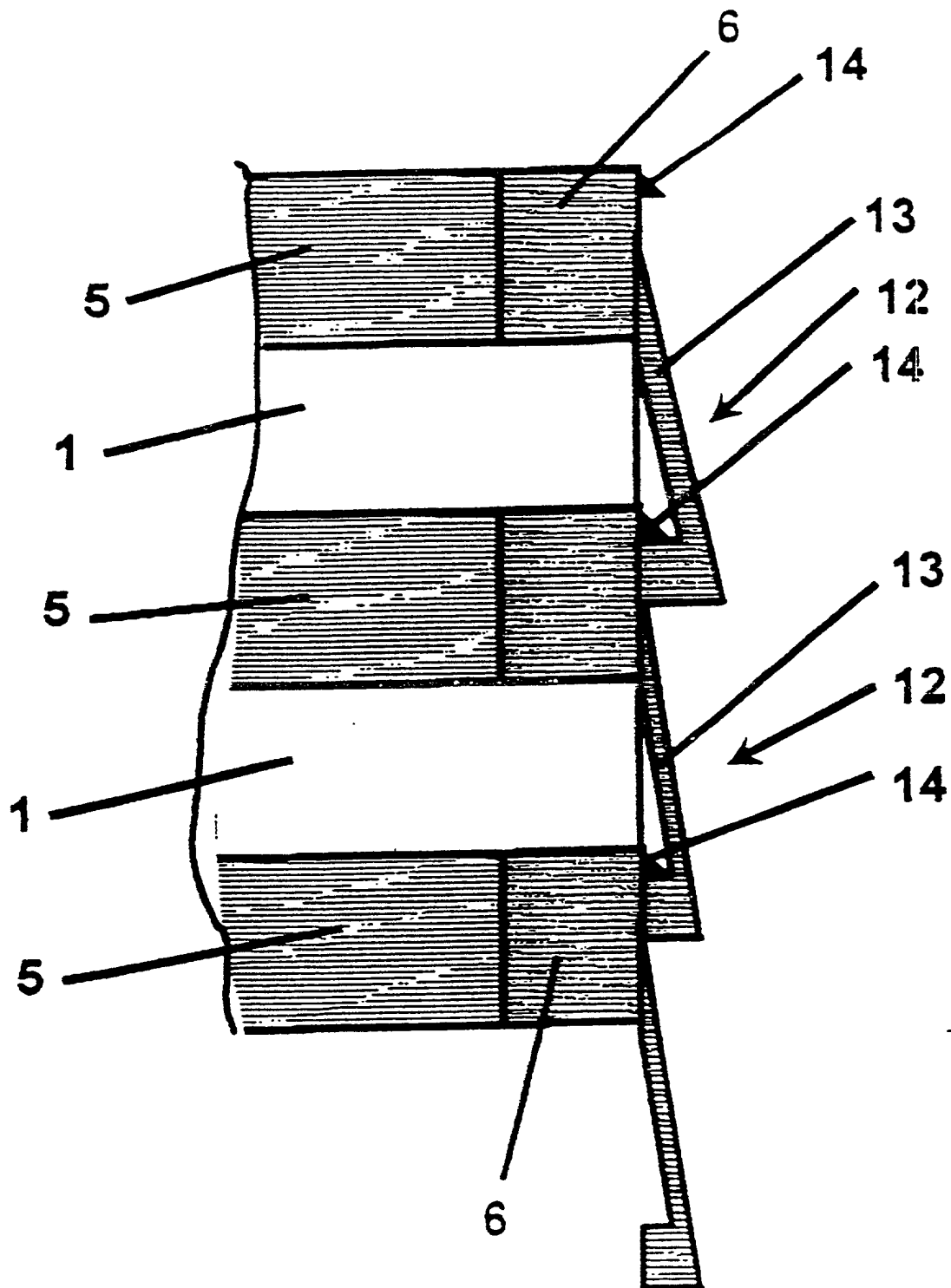


Fig. 6

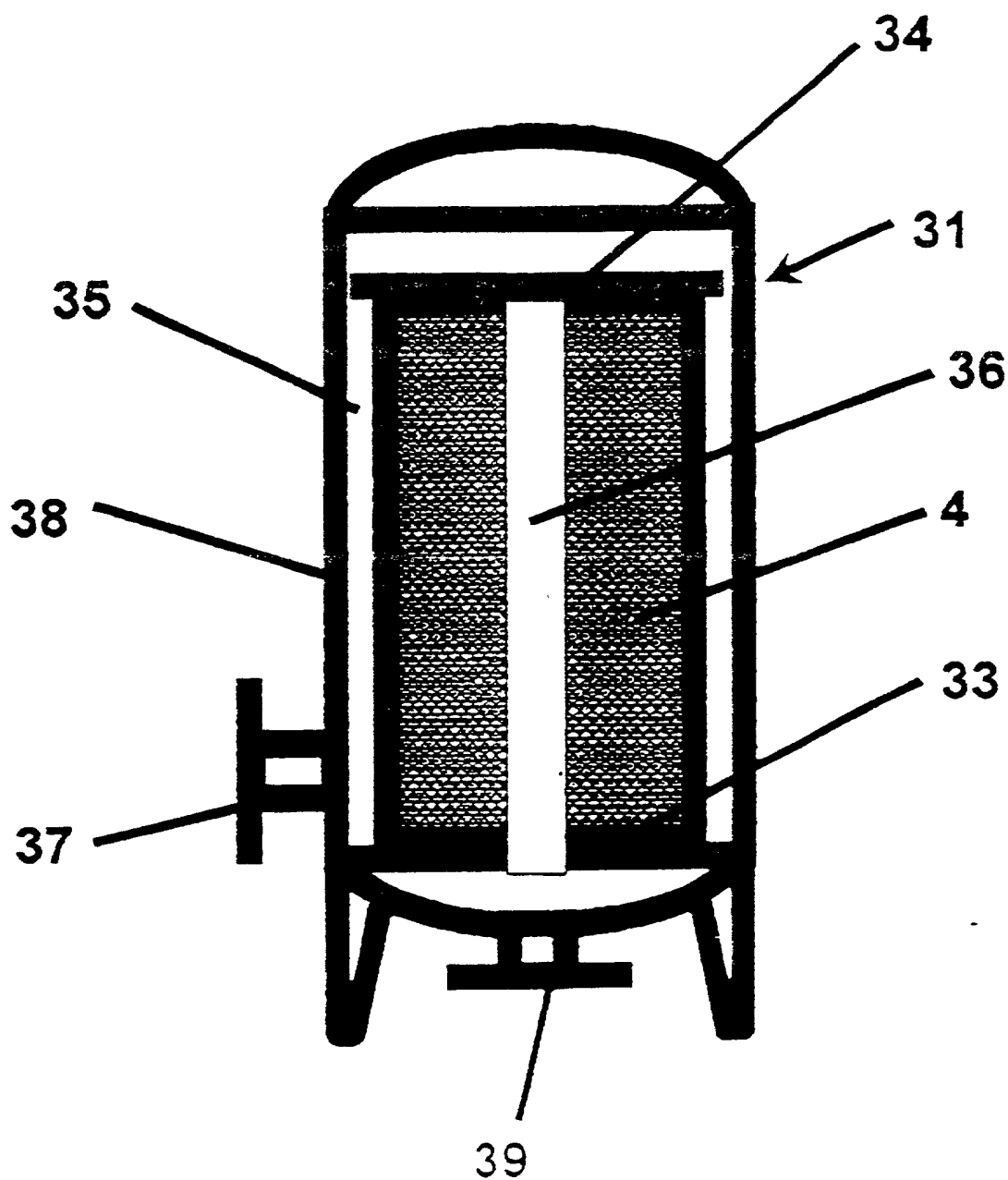


Fig. 7

RULE 63 (37 C.F.R. 1.63)
INVENTORS DECLARATION FOR PATENT APPLICATION
IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

P 505 FA

As a below named inventor, I hereby declare that my residence, mailing address and citizenship are as stated below next to my name, and I believe I am the original, first and sole inventor (if only one name is listed below) or an original, first and joint inventor (if plural names are listed below) of the subject matter which is claimed and for which a patent is sought on the invention entitled:

FILTER MODULE

the specification of which (check applicable box(es)):

☐ is attached hereto
☐ was filed on _____ as U.S. Application Serial No. _____ (Any Dkt. No. 3547-6)
☒ was filed as PCT International application No. PCT/EP99/05011 on 15 July 1999
and (if applicable to U.S. or PCT application) was amended on 23 June 2000

I hereby state that I have reviewed and understand the contents of the above identified specification, including the claims, as amended by any amendment referred to above. I acknowledge the duty to disclose to the Patent Office all information known to me to be material to patentability as defined in 37 C.F.R. 1.56. I hereby claim foreign priority benefits under 35 U.S.C. 119/385 of any foreign application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate listed below and have also identified below any foreign application for patent or inventor's certificate having a filing date before that of the application on which priority is claimed or, if no priority is claimed, before the filing date of this application:

Priority Foreign Application(s):

Application Number	Country	Day/Month/Year Filed
198 37 257.4	DE	17 August 1998

I hereby claim the benefit under 35 U.S.C. §119(e) of any United States provisional application(s) listed below.

Application Number	Date/Month/Year Filed
--------------------	-----------------------

I hereby claim the benefit under 35 U.S.C. 120/365 of all prior United States and PCT International applications listed above or below.

Prior U.S./PCT Application(s):

Application Serial No.	Day/Month/Year Filed	Status: patented pending, abandoned
PCT/EP99/05011	15 July 1998	

I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon. And on behalf of the owner(s) hereof, I hereby appoint NIXON & VANDERHYE P.C., 1100 North Glebe Rd., 8th Floor, Arlington, VA 22201-4714, telephone number (703) 516-4000 (to whom all communications are to be directed), and the following attorneys thereof (of the same address) individually and collectively owners/owners' attorneys to prosecute this application and to transact all business in the Patent and Trademark Office connected therewith and with the resulting patent: Arthur R. Crawford, 25327; Larry S. Nixon, 25840; Robert A. Vanderhye, 27078; James T. Moser, 30184; Robert W. Faris, 31352; Richard G. Basha, 22770; Mark E. Nusbaum, 32348; Michael J. Keenan, 32108; Bryan H. Davidson, 30251; Stanley C. Spooner, 27393; Leonard C. Michard, 29008; Duane M. Byers, 33363; Jeffrey H. Nelson, 30481; John R. Lastova, 33149; H. Warren Burnam, Jr., 29366; Thomas E. Byrne, 32205; Mary J. Wilson, 32856; J. Scott Davidson, 33489; Alan M. Kagen, 38178; Robert A. Moran, 29834; B. J. Sadoff, 36883; James D. Berquist, 34778; Updeep S. Gill, 37334; Michael J. Shea, 36725; Donald L. Jackson, 41090; Michelle N. Lester, 32331; Frank P. Presta, 19828; Joseph S. Presta, 35328; Joseph A. Rhos, 37515; Raymond Y. Mah, 41426. I also authorize Nixon & Vanderhye to delete any attorney names/numbers no longer with the firm and to act and rely solely on instructions directly communicated from the person, assignee, attorney, firm, or other organization sending instructions to Nixon & Vanderhye on behalf of the owner(s).

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